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SUBJECT: Haitian National Police - Status Report and Action Request

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 000068

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Three weeks after the devastating January 12 earthquake, and despite the loss of its headquarters building, commissariats, personnel, and equipment, the Haitian National Police (HNP) remains the most visible government institution in Haiti, and continues to provide a reassuring presence on the streets of Port-au-Prince. The HNP have still not accounted for 471 officers, have confirmed 71 are dead, and are unable to account for numbers injured. Distribution of HNP pay checks for January began on February 4, but has only reached a small fraction of personnel to date. In order to meet strategic HNP institution-building goals, NAS requests assistance for repairs to the National Police Academy; see paragraph 14. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) NAS met with HNP Director General Mario Andresol and a number of his key staff on February 3 to discuss the current operational status of the HNP. As of February 4, 471 HNP officers remain missing and 71 are confirmed dead (64 HNP and 7 corrections officers). An unknown number of officers are also injured. Despite this, a post-earthquake record of 4,235 police officers reported to duty in Port-au-Prince on February 3. Andresol identified the payment of salaries and the provision of food, water, and shelter as key to ensuring that the HNP retains policing capability. NAS would add fuel for generators and vehicles to this list, and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has coordinated donors for these necessities.

Food, Water, and Shelter

¶3. (U) NAS began daily delivery on January 21 of 5,000 Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), donated to the HNP on a non-reimbursable basis by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) under their humanitarian assistance mission. Until January 29, DOD also donated 1,000 bottles of water per day. NAS is working with the HNP to source water trucks to provide bulk water.

¶4. (SBU) Shelter for displaced families of HNP personnel remains an ongoing concern. An additional 600 tents are required to house HNP officers and their families. MINUSTAH informed NAS on February 4 that it has a written commitment from a donor to provide the required number of tents, but has not yet confirmed the delivery date. Andresol noted that many HNP officers and families in the hard-hit southern cities of Leogane, Petit Goave, Grand Goave, and the Southwest Department remain without shelter. Should MINUSTAH fail to deliver the required tents, NAS may need to assist the HNP with shelter before the rainy season begins in March.

Salary Payments

¶15. (SBU) Andresol told NAS that the HNP received payroll checks from the Government of Haiti (GOH) on February 2. The distribution of paychecks began on the evening of February 4, but checks have only been issued to a limited number of personnel to date. Andresol stated that distribution is being carefully coordinated, and will serve to create a final tally of the numbers of HNP still active, deceased, missing, and injured.

¶16. (SBU) Rumors that the GOH lacks sufficient funds for the payroll have begun circulating among the HNP rank-and-file, particularly given the delay between the February 2 delivery of the checks and the failure to distribute the checks in a rapid and timely manner. However, as of February 5, there are no confirmed reports that any HNP personnel have been unable to cash their checks. In addition, the GOH has confirmed to post that it has sufficient funds to cover the January payroll, but it remains unclear whether the GOH has sufficient funds to pay salaries for February and subsequent months. NAS will continue to monitor the salary payments in close coordination with the HNP and the Ministry of Justice.

Communications Network

¶17. (SBU) The HNP's main communications control center was destroyed in the collapse of the Presidential Palace. The HNP is currently working to locate space to replace the control center. In addition, the HNP's two main communications relay stations were damaged in the earthquake. The relay point on Boutilier mountain was repaired soon after the earthquake by a Motorola technical team. During a January 30 mission supported by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to the other main relay station, on Ile de la Gonave, technicians from the HNP and the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) discovered that the power supply to the relay station was not operational.

¶18. (SBU) On February 5, USCG volunteered rotary airlift to move equipment (generators and other power supply equipment) and fuel out to La Gonave island. The plan to restore the la Gonave relay point was carefully coordinated with the HNP's communications technicians, a NAS PAE IT contract technician, the FCC, Motorola, local telecommunications companies, and the USCG. The mission successfully restored power to this key relay point to seven Departments, including those in the Southern Claw. NAS is working closely with the HNP as they continue to identify individual stations or other points in the network in need of repairs.

¶19. (SBU) NAS has an ongoing HNP communications project to expand the HNP network. Prior to the earthquake, seventy-eight rural commissaries were outfitted with low-maintenance communications equipment geared for Haiti's limited infrastructure. NAS has provided solar power systems, base station radios, repeaters, Marine radios, and hand-held radios. Following the earthquake the HNP relied, and are still relying, on radio communications as both the cell and land line networks were not functional. (NOTE: NAS is aware that many other donors have plans to help the HNP with its communications network, but cautions that uncoordinated donations will result in a network that might have compatibility issues or equipment that the HNP may not be able to maintain. END NOTE.)

¶10. (U) According to Andresol, the resumption of new recruit training at the National Police Academy remains one of the HNP's top priorities. By bringing in new recruits, the HNP will be able to project a sense of institutional stability and normalcy, both to HNP personnel and to the general population. Andresol's goal is to bring in the next class of recruits by the end of February. This will help ensure that the HNP stays on track to meet its goal, as agreed upon with the United Nations, of 14,000 police officers by ¶2011. HNP's goal is to bring in a class of 800-1000 recruits for its 22nd class. Andresol confirmed that some 300 of these will become corrections officers. The HNP held a roll call on February 5 in order to determine how many recruits from the 1,046 person list established before the earthquake are still available. While the HNP is still verifying the list, over 800 were reconfirmed and deemed eligible to date. (NOTE: In December the HNP did not have sufficient funds for a new class, as their budget had been straight-lined for 2010. It is unclear how they intend to pay the salaries of these new police. END NOTE.)

¶11. (U) Before training can resume, significant structural repairs are required at the National Police Academy's facilities. The Academy's exterior wall sustained severe damage in the earthquake. NAS is exploring several options to repair the wall, as well as structural damage to the Academy's main gathering pavilion and chapel. As of February 5, it appears the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be unable to assist the HNP with these repairs, as its mission is strictly limited to humanitarian assistance.

¶12. (SBU) According to MINUSTAH, three HNP Academy instructors were killed in the earthquake, and 18 were injured, leaving 60 of the original 81 instructors available for the next training class. MINUSTAH also reminded NAS of the need to complete remaining work on the PAE-constructed barracks.

¶13. (SBU) Both Andresol and MINUSTAH continue to cite the lack of weapons, ammunition, and firearms training as a major capability gap. Due to a lack of firearms and ammunition, the 1,200 graduates from the last two Academy classes did not receive firearms training and were not issued a firearm upon graduation. The HNP plans to begin firearms training with these officers on February 8, using weapons and ammunition both purchased by the GOH and donated by France.

¶14. (U) ACTION REQUESTS: NAS requests as a high priority that INL add task orders to the PAE contract for the National Police Academy, both to complete the instructors' barracks, and to complete engineering assessments and a scope of work in order to rebuild/repair the wall, main gathering pavilion, and chapel. In addition, NAS requests that INL prepare for expedited procurement of uniforms, personal training gear, and other training items for the 22nd class as soon as the names and numbers of students are known. NAS also requests INL and L's final determination as to whether FY10 INCLE funds may now be used for the procurement of weapons and ammunition, given the folding of certain ACP authorities and exemptions into INCLE with the merger of the two accounts.

¶15. (SBU) COMMENT: Regular access to food, water, and shelter remain critical to maintaining the HNP's policing capability. NAS assesses that HNP personnel will continue to report for duty as long as these basic life support functions are maintained. However, the HNP rank-and-file may soon become restive if the GOH is unable to distribute pay checks for coming months in a timely fashion. In addition, should there be insufficient funds for future salary payments, the loyalty of the police to current commanders could erode. END COMMENT.

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